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Junk Car removal and Disposal

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

Cherry Frostic, Chairman, Keep Benzie Beautiful, Inc., Operation Scrap Project

Norman J. Brown, Benzie County Extension Director

May 1972

4 pages

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Junk Car Removal & Disposal

By CHERRY FROSTIC AND NORMAN J. BROWN,
Chairman, Keep Benzie Beautiful, Inc., OPERATION SCRAP Project;
and Benzie County Extension Director, Respectively.

The removal and disposal of junk cars involves three major problems: finances, manpower and equipment. Few units of government have the resources necessary to supply all these needs without outside assistance.

Most junk car cleanup programs are launched on either a citywide or countywide level, and most experience severe difficulties because they lack the required resources to complete the job successfully.

An exception is "Operation Scrap," a junk car harvesting program carried out in northwest Michigan's Benzie County. Operation Scrap was unique in that all manpower, equipment and finances were donated. Operation Scrap was also successful. This bulletin outlines the steps that led to that success in the

hope that other counties and municipalities may benefit from the experiences of Benzie.

Leadership Organized

The cleanup movement was initiated when a group of local women organized a working committee and incorporated under the title "Keep Benzie Beautiful" (KBB). Once this step was taken, it wasn't long before a countywide meeting was held with all government officials, club representatives and general citizens invited. At the meeting, the proposed "Operation Scrap" project was explained and those willing to help were asked to sign a project roster.

The next move by the KBB committee was to canvass the county to locate the largest concentrations

The Michigan National Guard supplied men and equipment for 3 weekends of hauling. At right, junk cars are loaded onto flat-bed trucks for hauling to crushing site.

of junk cars in order to establish the most efficient crushing sites possible.

A minimum of one acre of land was required for each of the crushing sites. The ground had to be flat, hard packed and easily accessible. Four such sites were finally located and established on state-owned land at convenient locations around the county.

Consent Forms

Once the junk cars were located and collection sites established, consent forms had to be signed by the car owners releasing their vehicles to Operation Scrap. These forms, and accompanying flyers explaining the project and its purposes, were printed free-of-charge at the Benzie County Extension Office. On Earth Day, local high school students delivered the consent forms and flyers throughout the county. The students were driven by members of a local women's club.

In the meantime, KBB presented a program to local school assemblies in order to bring about an awareness of the magnitude of the junk car problem and incite a concern for action.

A second push was then made to secure releases for the junkers. A meeting was held at which the county was divided into sections and a volunteer assigned to canvass each section for signed releases. This method helped, but there were still some releases left unsigned.

Crusher Chosen

Several crushing firms were investigated and a reliable one selected to do the work. When a total of 1,000 cars had been released to the project, a written agreement was contracted between the crusher and the State of Michigan to assure suitable cleanup of the state-owned sites after the crushing was completed.

Flyers soliciting donations to finance the project (Mainly to supply gasoline for the hauling vehicles) were printed at a discount by a local newspaper and sent out with the weekly edition. News releases emphasized that the services of Operation Scrap were to be free to all citizens owning junk cars.

All cars that had been released to the project were tagged with surveyor's tape and their locations marked on mailboxes or trees on the owner's property. Then convenient hauling routes were selected and a schedule designed for efficient pick-up so that project resources could be concentrated on cleaning up one area at a time, each in its turn.



Guard Helps

The Michigan National Guard was contacted and agreed to supply men and equipment from its armored division for three weekends of concentrated hauling. The Guard supplied over 20 men, 2 flat-bed trucks, 2 hydraulic lifts, and a pickup truck. The Benzie County Sheriff's Department assisted the operation by setting up radio communications for the Guardsmen and by providing volunteer escort service through traffic during actual towing and hauling.

National Guard efforts were facilitated by the local Farm Bureau which used its farm equipment to tow derelict cars out to the side of the road for pickup. In areas where farm equipment was not available, local wreckers and industry donated men and machines to either haul junkers to the side of the road or directly to the crushing sites. These volunteers also furnished their own gas.

The added publicity gained by the National Guard working on the project produced yet another response from local residents. A whole new wave of junk car releases came in to the committee. Newspaper and TV coverage kept local interest at a high level.

When the National Guard was no longer available for service, the County Road Commission took over hauling. The Commission supplied a driver and a helper for a period of 30 days — long enough to finish cleaning up the county.

General Motors Corporation became involved in Operation Scrap by donating the use of a flat-bed, tilt-bed truck with hydraulic lift and winch. The truck had been used on GM's proving grounds for hauling away wrecked cars.

Others gave whatever they could. Local oil and gas distributors, for instance, donated more than 800 gallons of gasoline for use by the towing and hauling vehicles. Additional gasoline provisions were taken care of through financial donations.

Where To Now?

When the project was completed, more than 5,000 junk cars had been processed and Benzie County

became a more attractive place to work, live and vacation. A permanent dumping site for the derelict cars has been established at the county landfill, and as this area becomes filled, a crusher will be contracted to process all the cars on the site.

Despite a difficult job well done, Benzie County residents are not resting on their laurels. They are actively campaigning to establish a suitable junk car ordinance for their county. Past experience in other Michigan counties has shown that an enforceable ordinance prohibiting owners from abandoning non-operating motor vehicles on their property is absolutely necessary to prevent a cleaned-up area from again becoming cluttered with unused vehicles.



At central site, junk cars were fed into crusher by tractor operated lift; then transported to recycling center.



After crusher processing, junkers were stacked, to await transport to southern Michigan for recycling. When the project was completed, the crushing company cleaned up the site as required by a contract with the State.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. George S. McIntyre, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. — 1P - 10M - 5:72 MP.